

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

TERRY A. BARNHART, *Ephraim George Squier and the Development of American Anthropology*. Critical Studies in the History of Anthropology Series. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press. 2005, ix + 406 p. Bibliography: The Anthropological Writings of Ephraim George Squier. Index.

The origin of American anthropology is often traced to Franz Boas (1858-1942). Nevertheless, the founding of the American Ethnology Society in 1842, the Smithsonian Institute in 1846, and the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1879, as well as the fieldwork of Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), Alice Fletcher (1838-1923), Frank Cushing (1857-1900) and others, attest to the existence of a pre-Boasian anthropological scholarship that was also known to European anthropological circles. Terry A. Barnhart's *Ephraim George Squier and the Development of American Anthropology* is an attempt to bring to light some of the "excluded" voices of pre-Boasian American anthropology through an examination of the works of Ephraim George Squier (1821-1888), one of the early self-made American intellectuals. This intellectual biography presents Squier as a multi-talented intellectual and an extra-ordinary and prolific writer whose activities, along with a handful of others, defined American anthropology from the 1840s to the 1870s. Barnhart considers Squier's *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley* (co-authored with Edwin H. Davis) (1848), chosen to be the first publication of the Smithsonian Institute, and his *Aboriginal Monuments of the State of New York* (1851) to be not only an archaeological classic but also to have left an impact on American cultural nationalism.

This well crafted and well researched biography locates Squier as part of the American school associated with the names of Samuel G. Morton (1799-1851) and Louis Agassiz (1807-1873), who were key promoters of polygenesis and racist views that justified slavery. As the series editor Stephen O. Murray and Regna Darnell point out in their introduction, Barnhart "shows the interconnections of nineteenth-century American science and popular racist beliefs," providing a portrait of Squier "as advocating [for] and attempting to produce holistic anthropology" (p. xvi). Barnhart demonstrates that, in spite of the racist views of the period, Squier stressed the need for systematic methods in anthropology and archaeology and pushed for a cultural understanding of diversity.

Through the use of an impressive number of unpublished and published sources Barnhart traces the details of the intellectual life of Ephraim

George Squier, demonstrating his contributions to the development of archaeology and anthropology in North America. Through his examination of Squier's work, Barnhart shows the concerns of this early American anthropologist for a holistic and integrated approach, as well as his stance against unsubstantiated speculations. His call for the professionalization of the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology is also evidenced through his aspirations for the Anthropological Institute of New York – unfortunately, though, the professionalization of anthropology was left to the next generation of anthropologists to achieve.

Barnhart stresses that the contributions of Squier to American anthropology and archaeology continued long after his studies of the “mounds” of the Mississippi and Ohio valleys. Later in his career he turned his attention to comparative studies and to fieldwork in Central America (in Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador) and in Peru, where he assumed diplomatic positions. Part of his ethnographic/archaeological material was published in *The Serpent Symbol, and the Worship of the Reciprocal Principles of Nature in America*, which shows Squier's belief in the use of systematic comparative studies to treat parallel developments as evidence for the psychic unity of human beings.

Squier's rich publications started at the age of 19 with literary works (poetry to social issues, labour relations). His disenchantment with teaching and civil engineering led him to journalism and to the development of archaeological interests in the Mound Builders, indigenous peoples and cultures of New York, his native State, other cultures and peoples of North America, collaborations with the Smithsonian Institute, interpretations of ethnographic and archaeological material, scientific methodology, religion, mythology, analysis of the human mind, comparative research in the Americas.

As Barnhart stresses, in writing Squier's intellectual biography one also learns about American Nationalism and the dominant trends in the nascent fields of archaeology and anthropology. The bibliography of Squier's works as Barnhart points out "is a better biography of his life than will ever be written" (p. 332).

Barnhart's *Ephraim George Squier and the Development of American Anthropology* is a welcome addition to recent scholarship on the history of anthropology and in particular to the study of the early phase of the discipline in North America. This intellectual biography is for anyone who is interested in the early phase of ethnographic and archaeological studies. It could be used as a supplementary text to theory courses at the undergraduate and graduate level.

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